

Secondly, I was pleased to see that the Sunnis participated in the process. The idea of deciding to go into a ballot box is a positive development. The idea that people are willing to try to work out their political differences through a process, a peaceful process, is—stands in stark contrast to the Al Qaida types and the terrorists and the killers that are trying to drive the process through violence.

The way forward is clear. The political process will continue with a constitution, if finally ratified, and then an election, coupled with a security plan that continues to train Iraqis so they do the fight. The violence in this election was down from the previous election. And one of the reasons why is because the Iraqi forces took the fight to the enemy and provided security, which is really heartening to coalition forces and friends and allies.

So yesterday was a very hopeful day for peace. It's an exciting day for a country that only a few short years ago was ruled by a brutal tyrant. So I'm pleased with the progress being made.

Bulgaria's Role in the Balkans

Q. Mr. President, Bulgarian Telegraph Agency. What do you think of Bulgaria's

role—of your ally, Bulgaria, as a regional leader in the Balkans?

President Bush. I think the—I watched your election—recent parliamentary elections very closely. The people voted, and then coalitions were formed for the good of the country. That's an example that many can learn from. There's nothing more wholesome than a young democracy not only setting an example for others but taking a lead in explaining to citizens that the best way to resolve differences is through a political process that is peaceful.

And so the President and I talked about Bulgaria's important role in taking the lead in helping young democracies grow in strength. We're laying the foundation for peace. Democracies are peaceful. They're at peace with their neighbors, and the Balkans needs peace. The Middle East needs peace. And working with friends like Bulgaria, we are laying that foundation for peace.

And I'm proud to have your friendship. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Purvanov and a reporter spoke in Bulgarian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Former Texas Supreme Court Justices October 17, 2005

The President. I want to welcome some of my fellow Texans here in the Oval Office. We've got Republicans and Democrats, people who have been on the court, attorney generals. They're here to send a message here in Washington that the person I picked to take Sandra Day O'Connor's place is not only a person of high character and of integrity but a person who can get the job done.

Harriet Miers is a uniquely qualified person to serve on the bench. She is a smart—she is capable. She is a pioneer. She's been consistently ranked as one of the top 50 women lawyers in the United States. She has been a leader in the legal profession. She's impressed these folks. They know her well. They know that she'll bring excellence to the bench.

So I want to thank you all for coming. Thank you for being part of a group of

people who understand that Harriet Miers will be a superb Supreme Court judge.

Welcome. I'm glad you're here.

Justice Hill. Thank you. Mr. President, we just all want to thank you for this nomination. We're excited about it, and we're here to try to let the people of America know what we all know, that she is an absolutely fantastic person and a great lawyer and will make a great judge.

The President. Well, thank you, sir. Appreciate you coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were former Chief Justice John L. Hill, Jr., former Associate Justice Greg Abbott, former Associate Justice James A. Baker, former Associate Justice Eugene A. Cook, former Associate Justice Craig T. Enoch, and former Associate Justice Raul A. Gonzalez, Texas Supreme Court.

Message to the Congress Giving Notice of Intent To Enter Into a Free Trade Agreement With Oman

October 17, 2005

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 2105(a)(1)(A) of the Trade Act of 2002, (Public Law 107-210)(the "Trade Act"), I am pleased to notify the Congress of my intention to enter into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Sultanate of Oman.

The Agreement will generate export opportunities for U.S. companies, farmers, and ranchers, help create jobs in the United States, and help American consumers save money while offering them more choices. Entering into an FTA with Oman will build on the FTAs that we already have with Israel, Jordan, and Morocco, as well as the FTA that we have concluded with Bahrain, and will be an important step on the path to fulfilling my

vision of developing economic growth and democracy in the Middle East and creating a U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) by 2013.

Consistent with the Trade Act, I am sending this notification at least 90 days in advance of signing the FTA. My Administration looks forward to working with the Congress in developing appropriate legislation to approve and implement this Agreement.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
October 17, 2005.

NOTE: The notice is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at the Iftaar Dinner

October 17, 2005

Please be seated. Thank you. Welcome to the White House. This is the fifth year in a row that it's been my honor to host an Iftaar in the State Dining Room.

Our distinguished guests represent the millions of Muslims that we're proud to call Americans, and many Islamic nations are represented here that America is proud